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From: Enck, Judith
Sent: Tue 4/26/2016 12:24:39 PM
Subject: Fwd: News Clips (PFOA)

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Region2 PAD News <Region2_PAD_News@epa.gov>
Date: April 26, 2016 at 7:45:46 AM EDT
To: "R2 EPA Region 2 (EPA Staff)" <R2_EPA_Region_2_EPA_Staff@epa.gov>
Subject: News Clips (PFOA)

Wall Street Journal: Concern Grows Over Tainted Drinking Water

Vermont, New Hampshire and New York expand efforts to find out how much of a potentially toxic chemical is in drinking water

By Cameron McWhirter and Jon Kamp

April 25, 2016 1:43 p.m. ET

Officials in Vermont, New Hampshire and New York are expanding their efforts to find out how much of a potentially toxic chemical ended up in drinking water, from private wells to public water systems.

Factories for decades used the chemical, perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA, as a plastic coating and to make consumer products such as Teflon nonstick pans, waterproof jackets and pizza boxes.

Former large manufacturers or users of PFOA, including 3M Co. and DuPont Co., agreed in 2006 to phase out PFOA production and use by December 2015.

Public concern over PFOA has spread through upstate New York and New England since August 2014, when a resident of Hoosick Falls, N.Y., near the Vermont border, tested his drinking water and found high levels of the acid. The man was concerned because his father, a former employee of the town's plastics plant that used PFOA, died of cancer.

Earlier this month, roughly 200 people crowded into a high school auditorium in Litchfield, N.H., to hear from New Hampshire environmental officials. Attendees voiced concerns about PFOA's possible effects on children, pets and garden produce.

ENLARGE Residents look for their homes on a map showing PFOA-contaminated areas at

a public information meeting in Litchfield, N.H., earlier this month. Photo: Cheryl Senter for The Wall Street Journal

The worry stems from a Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics Corp. plant in neighboring Merrimack, which New Hampshire officials are investigating as a possible source of PFOA contamination. The state in March sampled PFOA levels up to 620 parts per trillion in private Litchfield wells, well above the 100-parts-per-trillion level at which New Hampshire officials start to consider the amount unsafe. Tests in Merrimack measured as high as 1,600 parts per trillion.

Shawn Dalton, a retired 64-year-old, told the group that the drinking water from his home well tested positive for PFOA in March. "To me, the biggest problem is that nobody knows anything, and in a way we're going to be the guinea pigs," he said.

Nina Taliaferro said samples of water from her well showed PFOA contamination at 100 parts per trillion. The 32-year-old said she worries about possible exposure by her 8 1/2-month-old daughter.

New Hampshire officials have expanded testing of water samples near the plant, and announced that this week they plan to test soil at nearby sites like schools and playgrounds.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency hasn't declared PFOA harmful to humans, but it has raised concerns about the safety of the chemical in drinking water.

ENLARGE Officials give out boxes of bottled water this month in Litchfield, N.H., where some residents are concerned about PFOA contamination. Photo: Jim Cole/Associated Press

On Monday, the Environmental Working Group, a Washington-based advocacy group that assesses chemicals in consumer products and the environment, sent a letter to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy urging the agency to set an enforceable drinking water standard for the chemical, and to force former manufacturers to disclose all sites in the U.S. where they used, made or dumped PFOA.

The nonprofit group said the findings of PFOA contamination have "gone from a regional problem to a national public health crisis that continues to widen, with no apparent end in sight." The group, which has a history of battling with industry on environmental issues, has been raising health concerns about PFOA since 2002.

PFOA can be harmful to animals in high doses, causing tumors in the liver and other parts of the body, according to several scientific studies.

David Savitz, a vice president for research at Brown University, said his studies have found the chemical might cause "modest increases in disease" in humans, such as testicular cancer and hypertension in pregnant women. "We're not talking about something that is an established, documented health hazard," he said.

ENLARGE Litchfield, N.H., resident Charles Mower addresses officials during the public information meeting April 7. The towns of Merrimack and Litchfield discussed the results of

drinking water tests for PFOA. Photo: Cheryl Senter for The Wall Street Journal

A multiyear medical study in the 2000s of 70,000 people near a DuPont plant in West Virginia that made PFOA, found “some suggestions” of “probable links” between high exposure to the chemical and some illnesses. The study was funded by a settlement between DuPont and plaintiffs suing the company over PFOA exposure, and both the plaintiffs and DuPont had to approve the study’s findings, said Mr. Savitz, who served on the study panel.

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics, a subsidiary of Saint-Gobain SA of France, operates the plants in Merrimack and Hoosick Falls, N.Y., and used to operate the plant in North Bennington, Vt. Since last year, state investigators have found PFOA contamination near all three sites, and they cited the plants as potential sources.

“Saint-Gobain is participating in several ongoing investigations—in all three states—to determine which party or parties may be responsible for the PFOA,” said spokeswoman Dina Pokedoff in an email.

New York state in February committed at least \$10 million to clean up PFOA from drinking water in Hoosick Falls. Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s administration in January declared PFOA a “hazardous substance,” and New York’s Department of Environmental Conservation began conducting a statewide investigation to see if contamination extends beyond Hoosick Falls.

PFOA, which is highly resistant to water, solvents and acids, was invented in the 1940s. EPA officials assume its use in manufacturing has been widespread, and traces of the chemical have been found throughout most of the country and in many people’s blood.

Researchers have found high concentrations in drinking water near factories in states that include West Virginia.

Meantime, Vermont officials are testing water around the state after finding problems in two communities.

Vermont authorities have set a maximum drinking water limit of 20 parts per trillion, a standard that Saint-Gobain is challenging in court. The EPA plans to issue permanent health advisory limit sometime this spring, according to a spokeswoman.

“We’re confident we’re going to find how far-reaching the problem is and deal with it,” Vermont Gov. Peter Shumlin said.

Meantime, American Financial Group Inc. unit APU, whose former subsidiary once owned a wire plant located near PFOA-contaminated water in Pownal, Vt., agreed to cover costs for water sampling, bottled water and filtration, Vermont officials said last week. Filtration systems for entire homes can cost several thousand dollars.

Times Union

Rensselaer County reports latest PFOA test results

PFOA contamination found in Petersburg wells

By Kenneth C. Crowe II

Published 9:04 pm, Monday, April 25, 2016

Troy

Samples taken in March from five of 20 wells in Petersburg tested for PFOA exceeded federal guidelines for contamination, Rensselaer County said Monday.

Also, two wells that were retested for PFOS contamination had results considered undetectable, the county said.

The county is testing for perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) in groundwater supplies within one mile of the Taconic plastics plant due to concerns of contamination of drinking water supplies. The chemicals are used in waterproofing and other applications.

The county is working with the state Health Department and Department of Environmental Conservation to deal with PFOA contamination in Petersburg, Hoosic Falls and Hoosic.

The latest tests were conducted between March 21 and 23 of 20 samples from private wells.

The results showed two samples below 20 parts per trillion; four samples between 21 ppt and 100 ppt; five samples between 101 ppt and 1000 ppt; and nine samples considered non-detectable with a reading of less than 0.67 ppt.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency advises against using water with a reading of more than 100 ppt.

The results of the 94 total samples taken at private homes are 22 samples below 20 ppt; 21 samples between 21 ppt and 100 ppt; 24 samples between 101 ppt and 1000 ppt; seven samples over 1,001; and 40 samples were non detect.

The retesting for PFOS in four wells found two were non-detectable. The results for the other two wells have not yet been returned.

Hastings Tribune

Vermont to feds: Start regulating toxics or let us do it

By DAVE GRAM

Updated 15 hrs ago

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — In a state where a potentially cancer-causing chemical has turned up in both private and public drinking water supplies, Vermont lawmakers have a message for the federal government: Step up regulation of these substances or let them do it.

The Vermont Senate was expected this week to approve a House-passed resolution, calling for the federal government to reform the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act or give states more authority to regulate these chemicals.

About 84,000 largely unregulated chemicals are in circulation, with more than 1,000 new ones being added each year, the resolution says. In the past 40 years, just 200 of those chemicals have been fully tested, it says.

Congress currently is working on resolving differences in proposed updates to the law but at least agrees states should be restricted in some way from entering the regulatory field.

The resolution comes since the chemical, perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, has been found in more than 100 private wells in North Bennington and a public water supply in Pownal. The properties are near now closed factories that used the chemical.

The same chemical has been found in drinking water systems serving 7 million people in 27 states, according to the Washington-based Environmental Working Group that says it based its figures on federal government data.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency said in an emailed statement that it is evaluating Vermont's resolution. The agency noted that when the law was originally passed, "the statute did not provide adequate authority for the EPA to reevaluate these existing chemicals as new concerns arose or science was updated. The law also failed to grant the EPA effective tools to compel companies to generate and provide toxicity data."

Sen. Brian Campion, D-Bennington, is to present the resolution to his Senate colleagues, possibly by Tuesday.

"It's heartbreaking," Campion told The Associated Press. "To have your friends and neighbors, who've been told their water is contaminated, the water they've been drinking. And the potential impact on housing prices, economic development."

Vermont has been checking other areas around where PFOA or related chemicals are believed to have been used. Last week, officials announced none had been found on or around the grounds of the state fire academy in Pittsford, where firefighting foam that believed to have contained PFOA or a similar substance had been used.

Ken Cook, president of the Environmental Working Group, wrote to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy last week to complain that the agency was dragging its feet in cracking down on the chemical and had insufficient data on where it might still be found.

"It is reasonable to suspect that further contamination is lurking in other communities' water nationwide, but without complete and reliable information about the locations of all facilities that made, used or disposed of PFOA, state and local authorities do not know where they

should conduct additional testing," Cook wrote.

Petersburgh PFOA testing results released

By Joe Gullo

April 25, 2016, 5:31 pm

PETERSBURGH, N.Y. (NEWS10) – Officials in Rensselaer County released Perfluorooctanoic Acid (PFOA) contamination results from testing within a mile of Taconic in Petersburg.

Testing of 20 private wells in Petersburg found two samples below 20 ppt, four samples between 21 ppt and EPA Guidance level of 100 ppt, five samples between 101 and 1,000 ppt, zero over 1,001, and nine samples were non-detect (less than 0.67 ppt).

Results from 94 samples taken at private homes located in Petersburg found 22 samples below 20 ppt, 21 samples between 21 ppt and EPA Guidance level of 100 ppt, 24 samples between 101 ppt and 1,000 ppt, 7 samples over 1,001, and 40 samples were non-detect (less than 0.67 ppt).

Officials say 114 water samples were taken at 98 homes as some homes already had water treatment system. Results on 78 samples are still pending.

The County is coordinating with the New York State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation to continue the water testing program and will release results when available.

According to officials, PFOA results of more than 100 can have a filter system installed on their homes by Taconic. Installation of filter systems is ongoing.

For additional information on the ground water study, contact the Rensselaer County Health Department at (518)-270-2655.

Pittstown woman to receive carbon filtration system after being told she was ineligible

By Lindsay Nielsen

April 25, 2016, 5:38 pm

PITTSTOWN, N.Y. (NEWS10) – The water contamination crisis has stretched across the border of the communities of Hoosick and Hoosick Falls.

Kathy Weeks lives just over the town line from Hoosick in Pittstown. She said her well

tested at 2.91 parts per trillion for the chemical PFOA after she signed up with the state to have it tested.

Though her well tested low for PFOA, she said she was originally told by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that she would be getting a carbon filtration system. But a few weeks ago, Weeks said she received a phone call from the DEC informing her she would not be eligible for the system because she lives outside of Hoosick and Hoosick Falls.

“That night, I got a phone call, and they said, ‘Nope, you’re not in the town of Hoosick. Sorry,’” Weeks said.

Weeks said she talked to multiple DEC staff members and did not get a response, so she started writing letters. One went to Sen. Kathy Marchione, one went to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and one was sent to NEWS10 ABC.

Weeks wants her PFOA level to be non-detectable. To date, there has been no advisory level set for PFOA for long-term exposure.

“They don’t know, so I can’t see what gives them the right to say, ‘you’ll be okay with 2.91,’” she said. “They don’t have any clue.”

Weeks is also concerned if she wanted to see her home.

“You have to disclose it on the New York State disclosure form,” she said.

NEWS10 ABC reporter Lindsay Nielsen reached out to a DEC spokesperson to talk to Weeks. Hours later the DEC sent the following the statement:

Given this person’s close proximity to Hoosick and the presence of PFOA in her well, we will offer to install a filtration system. As the investigation into the extent of contamination continues, we will work with impacted homeowners to offer to install filtration systems through the state superfund program.

New Petersburg water test results released

By WRGB Staff

Monday, April 25th 2016

PETERSBURGH--Rensselaer County officials have released the results of the latest round of water testing for the chemicals PFOA and PFOS.

The county says of the four private wells that showed levels of PFOS, new test results show non-detectable levels of PFOS.

Results from the other two wells are expected shortly

Meanwhile, the county says it tested 20 private wells in the town for PFOA- which has been linked to certain kinds of cancer.

5 had levels above the level the regional EPA has deemed safe.

WRGB

Petersburgh residents feeling left out of relief efforts

By Kari Beal Monday

April 25th 2016

PETERSBURGH--Petersburgh resident Emily Marbe said every week for the last two months she hauls home 28 gallons of bottle water for her family.

"It's a lot to carry and it's tough to coordinate that with schedules," Marbe said.

Marbe's private well tested positive for PFOA at a level that is 21 times what the state deems safe.

"I worry about the health of my family," Marbe said. "In Hoosick falls you have real people to talk to, in Petersburgh you have nobody."

Marbe said she feels the handling of the water situation in Petersburgh is much slower than that in Hoosick Falls. New York State Department of Health has been handling most of the operations there, whereas Rensselaer County has been handling most of Petersburgh.

"In Hoosick falls the state had a lot of resources, so we said we will send our people," Rensselaer County Executive Kathy Jimino said.

The county has performed all of the water sampling so far in Petersburgh.

DOH spokesperson, Erin Silk, said it is the county's responsibility to maintain public water supplies and they helped out in Hoosick Falls because it was the first case in New York and it encompassed a larger population.

"We are working with the state and working with them on filtration systems," Jimino said.

Filtration systems have been another problem in Petersburgh.

"I have a filtration system, but it is the wrong filtration system," Marbe said.

"Apparently we had four systems installed before we got the word that we were going with a carbon grade that was more sufficient," Jimino said. "Think is a new situation that we had to deal with in Hoosick Falls and it wasn't until they tested out the filtration system there

that they figured out how it should be elsewhere."

Jimino said there is no timeline one when Marbe may get her correct filtration system and that it all depends on when the mechanic can get around to installing it at her house.

Marbe said it's also inconvenient to travel to Hoosick Falls for blood tests

"You have to drive 25 miles just to have your blood drawn and some people don't have internet or cars or transportation," Marbe said.

Silk said it was decided to have Petersburg go to the Hoosick Falls for blood testing because the location there was already staffed and set up.

"The Armory in Hoosick Falls is set up for optimal privacy and has locked storage space for supplies and equipment, there are established arrangements for pick-up of medical waste from blood testing, and its size and ample parking can accommodate HF and Petersburg residents if need be," Erin Silk said. "If specific requests are made to accommodate participants with special needs, we would be happy to make arrangements."

Shumlin: Pittsford Fire Academy Free Of PFOA Pollution

WAMC

By Patrick Garrett

Apr 25, 2016

In what is good news for the Vermont Fire Academy in Pittsford, state tests for a toxic chemical in water sources on and around the site have come up with no detectable levels.

Gov. Peter Shumlin says the academy was selected for tests because firefighting foams had been used in training exercises there that may have contained perfluorocarbons like PFOA and PFOS.

PFOA has been discovered around former industrial sites in North Bennington and Pownal, and the state has been testing for the chemical, which has been linked to cancer, at other locations.

The state checked residential wells and a town water line near the academy.

Tests surrounding the former Phoenix Wire facility in South Hero also recently turned out negative for PFOA.

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